

LAMPEDUSA AHOY!



by Ralph Berry

'Lampedusa ahoy!' is the cry from the hardy seafarers who have made landfall there. They have survived the perilous voyage from Libya and Tunisia, which has claimed many lives, before they were picked up by the border patrols. Lampedusa is the most southerly outpost of Italy, hence they look upon it with the same emotions as 'stout Cortez, who with eagle eyes stared at the Pacific.' Having made it to Italy from the badlands, they will disappear into Europe leaving no trace behind save the physical remains of their brief stay on the island. The normal population of Lampedusa is 6,000, the same number as the latest wave of migrants there, who have to be moved speedily to other parts of Italy. After that the customary wastage will settle in and the vast diaspora will claim their

own.

The Lampedusa story makes a regular appearance in the press.

Douglas Murray treats it at length in his *THE STRANGE DEATH OF EUROPE: IMMIGRATION, IDENTITY, ISLAM* (2017, pp.62-73,83-4). That was a best-seller which topped the *Sunday Times* list for 19 weeks with first rate reviews save for *The Guardian* which hated it and banned it. This was hardly surprising. The three opening sentences of Murray's book are

'Europe is committing suicide. Or at last its leaders have decided to commit suicide. Whether the European people choose to go along with this is, naturally, another matter.'

In October 2013 a boat filled with sub-Saharan people sank off the coast of Lampedusa. Over 300 migrants drowned. There was a huge political outcry, and the Secretary-General of the UN called for 'more channels for safe and orderly migration'. That has been the motto of the collective bienpensants, who flourish in England across the parties. There is in this deep calculation at the level of Government. Since stopping migrants is beyond the power of government, the authorities have an ingenious if paradoxical response—if we can't stop them, we'll let them in! Legally! Sorted!

So face is saved all round.

This bold and imaginative policy has received no serious challenge that I am aware of. Political leaders bless it. Those who don't keep quiet. And yet all the problems long seen in uncontrolled migration are untouched. They start but do not end with sheer number. Housing, schools, crime, health with its escalating demands upon the NHS, pensions for the social services and their expansion to cope with the latest arrivals, all place further demands on the State which it is manifestly incapable of meeting.

All this was foreseen by Douglas Murray. He could not however

imagine the latest stand of the Home Office, which has decreed that all migrants awaiting a judgment on their status must be given 3-star hotel accommodation. There must be many native British thinking ruefully I wouldn't mind living in 3-star hotels myself, especially when the Government is paying for all expenses. But the Government—or the governing classes—are determined to welcome all migrants, legal or not.

Lampedusa is the future. 'Saint-Helene, petit isle' wrote the young Napoleon in his schoolbook. Another small island is the future of Europe.